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ON
APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION;

WITH SOME

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

SPECIAL AND DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER



PRESENT DISPENSATION.

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[Note.—This tract is intended to give the substance of two papers in the *Christian Witness*, entitled "The Secret of God," and "The Character of Office in the present dispensation," and any one who is interested in the subject is referred to them for further information—especially to the former, which contains much which, for the sake of brevity, has been omitted here.]

ON APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION, &c.

It is remarkable how the Lord, when He has led us a little way by faith in simplicity of dependence on Him, provides, by the intervention of His gracious loving-kindness and guidance, for the exigency of circumstances, which the failings of men produce around us ; thereby teaching us to depend on Him for circumstances, as well as for ourselves ; and keeping us (the great position of truth) in continual dependence, that we may, in our feebleness, learn the fulness of His resources, and the faithfulness of His love ; His watchful care thus keeps us leaning on it, our only security from the power of selfishness and evil. Men, in all circumstances, shrink from the sense of dependence—dependence upon God. It requires faith ; they are willing to trust man present, not God, to their eyes absent : though this is a thing to be learned—it is the great lesson of the Christian dispensation—the character of all sanctity. It is true of righteousness in the Christian dispensation, for the righteousness of a Christian is another's and not his own ; it is true as well in every circumstance of individual life, as in the necessities of the Church, and of course therefore it is ever true. The book of Numbers, the history of the Israelites, is a lesson of this—a lesson of faith. We get out of Egypt, not knowing perhaps how, whither, or where we are going, only that we are leaving Egypt ; but when Canaan is our constant hope, the wilderness is our constant way ; whether our journey be long or short, of vigour of attainment, or of self-earned weariness of unbelief, it is still through the wilderness ; and God is there with us teaching us faith, teaching us to depend upon God, where there is nothing else to depend upon. There

may be green spots from Him who gives rivers in the wilderness ; yea from our own souls rivers may flow, fed from the Rock that never fails ; at the commandment of the Lord we may journey, at the commandment of the Lord we may rest awhile ; manna may daily surround our camp, surely fed every morning's early dawn, but we are still in the wilderness, in entire dependence upon God, learning to enjoy, in the well-taught lesson, of whence the enjoyment really comes. Losing the sense of this was the very mark of guilt in the Israelites in the land—“A Syrian ready to perish,” was their constant confession in their faith, when they brought the first fruits of that good land, a land of valleys, and watered with the dew of heaven, a land where the Lord’s eyes continually were. (Deut. xxvi. 5.) This is our continual failing in the service of the Church, namely, in the sense of entire dependence. There is nothing so hard to the human heart as constant dependence, and yet there is nothing so foolish as self dependence. When faith fails we constantly find out where we are. God will provide if we trust Him ; but without him it is a wilderness indeed. The Church, in its exigence, is ever apt to “loathe the light food,” nevertheless it is conducted ever of God.

But there is another state of things far worse than this ; when Babylon has carried the body of the people away, the reluctance of the residue to stay in dependence of faith, and their determination to go down into Egypt for help, where judgment would surely overtake them. Such is the continual tendency of the human heart, such help is the Church therefore continually seeking. But the Church is not of this world, even as Christ is not of this world. And how is Christ not of this world? Surely in Spirit and in character He is not of it, as an evil world, unholly, opposite to God. When his spotless excellency passed through it, it was unscathed, though passing through every scene that wearies and bows down our frail and feeble hearts. But it was with other thoughts also that Jesus was not of this world, and so said He of His disciples. He was not of it but of heaven—the Lord from heaven ; and we are not of it,

but from thence, associated with Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and is now separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens, now in blessed association with Him who is the object of it there, and this association is now entered into and realized by faith, which sees the glory of the dispensation accomplished in its Head. The founding of the dispensation upon the accomplishment of the exaltation of its Head, is of the greatest importance, because it is the seal of the character of the whole dispensation. It belongs, as being rejected in its Head from the world, to the heavenly.* But it is not merely as the result of the treatment of the Lord, and His being glorified, that the dispensation had such a character, and held such a place. In the purpose of God it had no other place. It was the secret of God "hidden from ages and generations," and formed an extraordinary break in the dispensations, to the rejection, for their unbelief, of the proper earthly people of God. It was a forming *out* of the earth but not *for* it, a body for Christ; a heavenly people associated with him in the glory in which He should be and should reign, when the full time was come, over the earth, in those "times of restitution which should come from the presence of the Lord." It is a system forming no part of the earthly system, though carried on through the death of Christ in the forming of its members in the earth. But when all things are gathered together in one in Christ, in "the dispensation of the fulness of times," these will be associates of his glory; and in them His glory and the riches of his grace will be shown, given them in Christ Jesus before the world began, (2 Tim. i. 9.) according to the gift of the Father. The Church was God's purpose formed for Christ's especial and personal glory before the worlds, and kept secret till the time of his sending down the Spirit, after the actual glory was accomplished, after Jesus had entered, in risen Manhood, into the glory which He had with the Father before the world was.

* *τοις ἀνευπαροις* See Greek Eph. ii. 6.

The Church has sought to settle itself here; but it has no place on the earth. It may shew forth heavenly glory here according to that given to it; it has however no place here, properly speaking, but its place is in glory with Christ in the heavenlies at his appearing. We, through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith."

The grace of the Gentile dispensation was a secret made known on the work of Christ being finished, but its unparalleled glory was that "which eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had entered into the heart of man to conceive," till God revealed it by His Spirit. It was not that glory which forms the chief subject of direct prophetic testimony, for that is earthly glory; the other may be glanced at allusively, but Jewish expectation was not very wrong. It is not by violently wresting language, and giving it a meaning quite diverse from the literal, which would necessarily be general and vague, that we shall be most fully enabled to enter into the glory into which the faithful are now brought by the resurrection of Jesus, but by the learning that the subject was entirely new, and by man unthought of, unheard of, before.

The scriptural testimony to this is very abundant; and it appears to me so important, in every point of view, to see that the present dispensation is not an improvement of the preceding, or an introduction to the coming one, but so entirely isolated, that its directory of conduct could only apply to itself, that I would note some of the most striking scriptures on this most interesting point.

The language of our Lord (Matt. xiii.) is important on this point, as showing that the things which were secret before, were now revealed. "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; for verily I say unto you that many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear and have not heard them." Again in Mark iv. 11,—"Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God." But the

Lord Himself intimated to His disciples that they were not then in the capacity of entering into the things of which He was both the subject and the communicator, ... “I have yet many things to say unto you but ye cannot bear them now ; howbeit when He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into *all* truth ; and He will show you things to come”—we must therefore look to the testimony of the Spirit through the Apostles. And here I would notice that remarkable testimony to the novelty and distinctness of this present dispensation, (Rom. xvi. 25, 26.) “Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith : to God, only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ, for ever, Amen.”

Again, (1 Cor. ii. 6—12,) “We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world ; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory.—But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.—But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit ; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.” “Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” It would be necessary to transcribe the whole of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th chapters of the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians, as bearing on the point. It will be sufficient at present to notice the marked contrast between the former and present dispensation. The ministration of *death*, written and engraven on stones was *glorious*, how shall not the ministration of the *Spirit* be rather *glorious*? “If the

ministration of *condemnation* be *glory* much more doth the ministration of *righteousness exceed in glory.*" "Even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." This is sufficient to shew the entire difference in the character of the former and the present dispensations,—that they are, in fact, as opposite as death and life.

I would now state the more direct testimony of the same Apostle in the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians.—"Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times, He might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are *in heaven* and which are *on earth.*" The preceding verses most clearly state what God's good pleasure had been, even the secret of God in His mind from all eternity, not only to have a people *on the earth* in whom He would be glorified, but *sons in heaven*; joint-heirs with the Son of His love, of all the glory He had given Him. The stability both of that in heaven as well of that on earth, could only be in Christ. But the great wonder was that in the introduction of this novel and transcendent glory, it was not confined to those "whose were the promises," but came in a way of direct sovereignty on the part of God, and for the express purpose of displaying "in the ages to come the exceeding riches of his grace," "that the Gentiles also might praise God for His mercy." The Apostle therefore places Jews and Gentiles entirely on the same level as to this—"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, *being predestinated* according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, that we (Jews) should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ: in whom *ye* also (Gentiles) after that *ye* had the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom also after that *ye* believed, *ye* were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of *our inheritance* (as common to both) until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."

There was a twofold secret of God now made known. That any should have been chosen to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ, was a thing quite novel to those whose proper expectation was Messiah over them, as the Son of David in earthly glory. But there was besides, that this was to be preached unto the Gentiles and they that were to be called into participation of it. Accordingly we find the Apostle resuming the subject (c. iii.) "If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward, (Gentiles,) how that by *revelation* He made known unto me *the mysteries* (as I wrote in a few words, whereby when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in *the mystery of Christ*), which in other ages was *not* made known unto the sons of men, as it is now *revealed* unto the holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel : ... that I should preach among the Gentiles, the untraceable* riches of Christ, and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the *mystery*, which from the beginning of the world *hath been hid in God*, who created all things by Jesus Christ ; to the intent, that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the *Church* the manifold wisdom of God."

And here the mischief of confounding all things, and limiting God to that which occupies our mind, is very apparent. The Church has at the same time forgotten her distinctive glory, and learnt to be high-minded : to judge from the thoughts of most Christians, one would think that the Jews were kept distinct, and in their present state, merely to afford evidence to Gentiles of God's favour to themselves. How little is it remembered, that the mystery made known, was, that the *Gentiles*

* * "Unsearchable" in our translation does not convey the idea ; it is that of which there is no trace. The same word (Rom. xi. 33) is rendered "past finding out." In both cases they allude to this revealed mystery, and I believe are intended by the Spirit to convey to our minds that there was no trace of it or clue to it until it was actually revealed.

should be *fellow-heirs* and of the *same body*, and *partakers* of His promise in Christ ; but there is this, most important to be noticed, that the mystery then revealed to the Apostles by the Spirit, had not in other ages been made known to the sons of men, but from the beginning of the world had been hid in God. Now "the restitution of all things," God *had spoken* of by the mouth of *all* His holy Prophets, since the world began. (Acts iii. 21.) so that it cannot be the same with the mystery now made known, and clearly proves that this mystery had not been the subject of prophetic testimony. Restitution necessarily implies a previous state, even that in which God had pronounced all things to be very good ; and again shall God rest in them when brought back by Him, the Redeemer, even Christ Jesus. But the subject of this mystery had no previous existence, except in the purpose of God, and hence it is always dated by the Holy Spirit, as anterior to creation ; "according as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world" (Ephes. i. 4) ; "according to His own purpose and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ : who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2 Tim. i. 9.) "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began ; but hath in due time manifested His word through preaching" (Tit. i. 2.) This proves its complete independence of and distinctness from any thing that had been known since the world began ; things might have been types of it, or as the fulness of time approached there might have been intimations of it, but it was not connected at all in character with those things. It is not a speculative matter, but one of great practical importance ; as surely the bulk of scriptural testimony fully demonstrates. In the Epistle to the Ephesians for instance, wherein we find the fulness of the Church set forth, we find the Spirit in the Apostle so speaking as to shew us that this was the great mystery now made known. This is distinctly expressed in chap. v. "this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning

Christ and the Church," and again (chap. vi. 19), "for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the *mystery* of the gospel." This great mystery then, or secret in the divine mind, now divulged, is the Church, the body of Christ, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." "It is the Church of the first-born, which are written *in heaven*." Now unless its distinct glory, as blessed with *all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies*, is seen, its character and service cannot be known. Heavenly glory was that which was not revealed to the saints of old; how could it be until the appearance of Him, even the Son of man which is in heaven? "The heaven even the heavens are the Lord's, but the earth hath He given to the children of men." True, the Patriarchs looked for a heavenly city, and confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth; so likewise David; but whatever the Spirit of Christ in them did testify, was but obscurely; "they searched what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which should follow, unto whom it was revealed, that *not* unto themselves, but *unto us* they did minister the things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into." (1 Pet. i. 10.) Abraham the father of us all, had promises of seed numerous as the stars of heaven, and as the dust of the earth, and doubtless the one to be highly exalted above the other. But the Church, the oneness of Spirit and of glory with the risen Lord, into which the saints are now brought, was not known till Jesus was glorified and the Holy Ghost had come. Hence we find the almost universal tenor of prophetic testimony is to earthly glory, which could be apprehended before Jesus was glorified, although only secured in and by Him. Now the effect of taking promises of earthly glory, and applying them to that which is heavenly, has been to lose sight of the great purpose of God, both "to reconcile all things to Himself, both which are in

heaven, and which *are on earth*, by the blood of the cross" (Col. i. 20) : and "to gather together in one all things in Christ both which are *in heaven*, and which *are on earth* (Ephes. i. 10), thus placing the stability of both on a sure basis. But this is not all, for the Church taking that to herself which does not distinctly belong to her, has lost sight of what does, and hence, has been exhibiting a Jewish character, rather than, exhibiting the fulness of Christ.

I would now briefly advert to the distinctness of the glory, into fellowship with which the saints are brought, having nothing at all analogous to it previous to its revelation. It appears to me of importance to remark, that the glory of the Church is *distinctive* and *characteristic*; that it was not directly revealed, previously to the coming down of the Holy Ghost—"None of the princes of the world knew it;" it was what "eye had not seen, nor ear heard, neither had entered into the heart of man." It is best seen by contrasting it with the proper Jewish expectation of Messiah. Now it is most clear that they looked upon their Messiah as the Redeemer to deliver them and their land, to restore it to fruitfulness, to make them glorious* as a people in the eyes of all among whom they had been despised; to make them† also the channel of blessings to others; and all this when Jehovah should be their King.—"Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion and *in Jerusalem* and before His ancients gloriously." (Is. xxiv. 23.) Besides all this, there was the real moral glory, "thy people shall be all righteous," a people in whose hearts the Spirit of God dwelt. "A new heart also will I give unto you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will give you an heart of flesh and I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and to do them, and ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers." (Ezek. xxxvi. 26—28.) Now both in this place and in Jer. xxxi. where the

new covenant with the house of Israel is stated at large, its connexion with earthly blessing, and the glory of Jerusalem; and *the land* is most definitely marked; and it is only because we have read those accounts with pre-occupied minds that their strict application to Israel should ever have been questioned. Our Lord evidently alludes to this in His conversation with Nicodemus,—“Marvel not that I said unto you, *ye* (Jews) must be born again;” their earthly blessing was only to be secured by God giving them His Spirit. And when Zacharias, under the Holy Ghost, prophesied, it was evidently to the glory of Israel under Messiah, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed* His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spake by the mouth of His prophets which have been since the world began, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us, to perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.” (Luke i.)

Now the mystery revealed of the Church is its oneness with Christ. The Messiah, though of, was distinct from Israel; the nation was not to be brought into oneness with Him, but He was to be over the nation, to fulfil the good pleasure of God to it. A king and a people are distinct, though they have a common interest, for a king is over his people: not so the Church, Christ is never said to be king† over his

* This word in the Old Testament always implies power: “the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.” (Deut. vii. 8.) Redeemer is not applied to Jesus at all in the New Testament, which is the record of His humiliation.

† The Church fully acknowledges His title both as king of Israel and of the earth, although now rejected by both.

Church, but the Head of it as His own body, "Head to His Church, over all things;" the Bridegroom, and the Church His Bride; the Tree, and the Church the branches; language which while it implies positive and actual union, at the same time involves the idea of decided pre-eminence. But the essential characteristic of the Church is that its glory is heavenly; "those who believe in Jesus are made one with Him, not as "the Son of David after the flesh," "but as "declared the Son of God with power, according to the "Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." "The hope set before them is that which entereth into "that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for "us entered." Heaven is now opened, and it is the resting place of the Church in Christ Jesus.

"To be accepted in the beloved;"—to be brought into that complete oneness with Him, so that the love whereby with the Father loved Him is the same with which He loves those who by His Spirit are thus made one with Him;—to have every thing which could be predicated of Him, predicated of the Church; saving of course that which was vicarious in the work of Christ—this was the mystery, the revelation of which made all old things to pass away, all the long cherished hopes of an Israelite were immediately given up by one who was thus brought into fellowship with the Father and the Son. What a word is that—"Fellowship" between the Creator and the creature, that they should have a common interest the one in the other! It would indeed have remained a hidden mystery, but the incarnation of the only begotten, shows how this can be; "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God," though what we shall be "hath not yet been manifested." It could never have entered into the mind of an Israelite, that such a glory was contemplated, as that any should be so completely identified with Jehovah Jesus, the God-man, as to have their vile body fashioned like unto His glorious body. But this was the eternal purpose of God, this was in his mind from before the foundation of the world;—"whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His

Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. The Father not only prepared a body for Jesus to suffer, but likewise a body mystical, in which He should be glorified; for He is to be "glorified in His saints." His glory is not only personally to be exhibited, but to be exhibited in and through them; He is not only to bless by His personal presence, but His saints are the channel of blessing to others, as was originally promised to Abraham, "thou shalt be a blessing"; so now the Church is the channel of blessing even in its wilderness state; out of it alone go "the living waters." "He that believeth on me as the scripture has said, out of His belly shall flow rivers of living water." Jesus is the well of life, but the stream is dispensed through the Church, and what blessedness shall there be when "the world to come" (Heb. ii. 5.) is no longer under angels, but under Jesus and His saints; the stream of life immediately flowing from Jesus, through them, in an unhindered course to others. They shall be a blessing, as they are called to inherit a blessing; they shall be kings and priests unto God, and they shall reign over the earth as kings, say (Rev. v. 10.) and make known (and who so well able as those who know what grace is) God to others.

God hath called us into His own kingdom and glory; "He called you by our gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is said of Israel, "arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee;" not that they obtain the glory of the Lord. In a word, their glory is distinct from the Lord's glory; that glory is something without them, but the glory of the Church is identical with that of the Lord; the Church is the vessel filled with glory, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all. This was a something so far beyond thought, that well might the apprehension of it make old things pass away.

Again, be it remembered, that the present blessing and glory of the Church is distinctively heavenly; Jesus is now in heaven, and His people can only be in Spirit where He is. It seems nothing novel to us to

talk of heaven as our place, and of being in heaven, as our glory ; yet what does this mean in the mouths of most, but that heaven is to be enjoyed after earthly enjoyment has failed—that earth is the place for the enjoyment of the body, and that heaven will receive our departed spirits. But Jesus is “the Saviour of the body,” “the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.” It was the brightness of the glory of Jesus the Son of man, which filled Stephen with holy rapture ; it was unto that glory he looked, and in the likeness of it he expected to awake and be satisfied. But the calling of the Church is *now* heavenly, its place of rest now is “in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus,” believers now let pass old things, because, “their citizenship is in heaven,” “they are no more of the world, even as Jesus is no more of the world.” “As He is, so are they in this world,” as He is the beloved Son, so are they sons beloved ; as He is heir of all things, so are they heirs of all things. This is their standing, though they be locally in this world ; this is indeed the new creation unheard of, unknown before, which places the “least in the kingdom of heaven,” in such preeminence ; they are heavenly—one with Jesus the quickening Spirit, one with Him who sits on the right hand of the majesty on high. Here has been the mistake and confusion, heaven has been made the future, instead of the present blessing of the Church ; hence believers have been Christians in hope, but Jews in practice ; all hope of earthly blessing ceased with the rejection of Him in whom alone the earth could be blessed, by those through whom the blessing was to be communicated—(Is. xxvii. 6 ; Mic. v. 8 ; Zech. viii. 13, 22.) Those who will be blessed now, must follow Jesus the only giver of blessing into heaven “whither the forerunner is for us entered.” Until *He* comes from the right hand of the Father, blessing from the earth is barred. What an interesting moment is the present, “the kingdom of heaven is opened :” oh ! if men knew but the gift of God, and the present blessing held out to them, how would they “press into it,” how would they “take it by force.” Testimony might be multiplied

as to the distinct character and glory of the present dispensation, as being entirely novel, and in no measure corresponding with any thing that had preceded it ; in a word, Christ and the Church was the *hidden* mystery, the secret of God, until revealed by the Spirit coming down from Jesus glorified ; not only to testify of it, but also to constitute it.

The attempt to make all scriptural declarations of glory to concentrate in one, has left the Church a very vague and undefined hope of its real glory, and almost entirely annihilated that which is its present glory. "There are bodies celestial and terrestrial." True that all glory radiates from Jesus who is the Head of earthly as well of heavenly glory. But to understand the Church's present portion and conduct, it is necessary to distinguish as to what her real calling is. Now as the Church is called unto the glory of God, so is she called to be an imitator of God. (Eph. v. 1.) "To live godly in this present world" is to imitate God, not as revealed under the legal dispensation as the exactor of righteousness, but as now revealed in grace. God is dealing with the world in grace, and the Church is to do the same. The place where God is exercising judgment is the Church. (Compare 2 Cor. v. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 32.) Alas ! how completely is every thing subverted — grace to the world, judgment in the house of God is the divine order. (1 Peter iv. 17.) His saints have reversed the order ; harsh judgment on the world and smooth speaking among themselves, have been a stumbling-block in the way of the world, and settled the Church in a state of self-complacency.

It is most important to perceive the distinct character of the present dispensation, that it is not an improvement of the old—a new piece put on an old garment, but the mystery hidden from previous ages and generations, now brought to light, in contrast with the many predictions of the world's blessing. Discrimination here is most needful, because the discovery of the peculiarity of this dispensation immediately shows that the world's blessing cannot be brought about under it. Righteousness, *not* grace is the princi-

ciple to order the world. "A king shall reign in righteousness;" and He that reigns says, "I will not know a wicked person; whoso privily slandereth his neighbour him will I cut off; him that hath a high look and a proud heart will I not suffer. . . . He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight; I will early destroy all the wicked of the land, that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord" (Ps. ci.) It is therefore morally impossible that general earthly blessing can be secured under the present dispensation, which is one of *bearing* with evil instead of *punishing* it; and therefore so long as the gospel continues to be preached as the testimony to God's grace, the earth's blessing must be deferred. That blessing will not, cannot be, till God's "judgments are made manifest." Contempt cast on "the riches of God's goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering," ushers in "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

I believe this to be the most important point for the Church to consider now—looked at as an earthly dispensation it merely fills up, in detailed exercise of grace, the gap in the regular earthly order of God's counsels, which was made by the rejection of the Jews on the covenant of legal prescribed righteousness, in the refusal of the Messiah, till their reception again under the new covenant in the way of grace on their repentance. But though making a most instructive parenthesis, it forms no part of the regular order of God's plans as to the earth, but is merely an interruption of them, to give a fuller character and meaning to them. As to the thing introduced, we are called to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is not the place or time of His glory; our calling therefore is not at all here, but "when Christ who is our life shall appear, we shall also appear with Him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.) Ministration upon earth is merely to this purpose. The moment there is a "minding of earthly things," there is "enmity to the cross of Christ;" for "our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we

look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself." The Jewish system was a system of derived earthly authority, and while the Church was among the Jews simply, it never lost its earthly character entirely; it was open at any time to the return of the Lord, and was formed upon the order of authority derived from Him when He had not yet ascended into glory, though it was accompanied at the same time by the Spirit which enabled the apostles to testify to His ascended glory. But they were Jews, and they maintained the character of the earthly system so far as it was associated with the risen Saviour, the hope of Israel; for their proper hope as Israelites was that all the promises of earthly glory should be made good to Israel in the resurrection of the Messiah. The everlasting covenant, "even the sure mercies of David," was secured by the resurrection, as the apostle testifies, (Acts xiii. 34.) "And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, 'I will give you the sure mercies of David.'"

Thus we find the Lord telling them, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, He shall testify of me, and ye also shall bear witness of me, because ye have been with me from the beginning." Accordingly we find the eleven before the descent of the Holy Ghost, the witness of the glory, choosing Jewishly by lot, as a "witness with them of the resurrection," one who "companied with them all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among them." So in the sermon to those who came together on the hearing of the tongues, we read "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are witnesses;" and then he adduces the descent of the Holy Ghost as the witness of His exaltation. Again, in the sermon in Solomon's porch, "Whom God hath raised from the dead, whereof we are witnesses," and then goes on with a sermon purely Jewish. In Acts v. 32, the double witness is directly referred to, and distinguished. So the Lord

after his resurrection breathed into his disciples, the Spirit of God, saying "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," "whose sins ye remit," &c. Subsequently they received the Holy Ghost, the witness of exalted glory.

Thus, the Apostles became apparently the heads of derivative power, at any rate the existing depositary of authority (for we read not that they were ever commissioned to confer authority on others), and they stood before the world as the founders of the Church among the Jews, with commission to extend it to all nations. But the Lord, save in the testimony of apostacy by the Apostle John in the Revelation, (ch. xiv. 6,) gives us no historical account of any such transmission of it through the world. It formed no part of the record, nothing on which the Church of God had to rest for its direction. It is remarkable too that the prayer of our Lord in the 17th of St. John, "that they all may be one," was literally fulfilled in the Jewish Church, in the 1st chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, in them who were one together in the unity of those who believed on Him through their word, in their separation out of the world, even to the surrender of their goods, and in the witness thus afforded to it; "praising God and having favour with all the people," "great grace being upon them all." Here the scene all but closes, such we see not elsewhere at all. This was the Church of those connected with Christ in the flesh, who had seen Him in the resurrection, and derived their authority from Him in earthly association, though endued with power from on high; ignorant of the times when the kingdom should be restored to Israel, but knowing that the heavens had received Him who was able, and was to do it; and looking for the repentance of the people that He might return. (See Acts iii. 19.)

But they did not repent, and when this witness of His resurrection was refused, and the power of the Holy Ghost in it rejected, another witness was raised up to declare Jesus at the right hand of God; and to show demonstratively that they were doing as their Fathers had done, resisting the Holy Ghost. But this was in fact a testimony against them for their pre-

vious rejection of the Apostolic word and power recorded in the previous chapters, and is closed by the testimony of seeing heaven now opened, launching the Church into a new scene, a scene of death to itself as to its earthly hopes, but into which it entered by the perception of heaven open, and Jesus seen there. With this accordingly, Jewish testimony to it as a Church closed, and the Jewish scene altogether closed, till they should say "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." But this word of the Lord was accomplished to the Church by the view of Jesus in heaven thus opened: and observe, He is not seen *sitting* as we see Him in spirit, but *standing*, ready at once to receive His suffering Church. Individuals from among the Jews might be converted and doubtless were, but the order of Jewish ministry ceased; heretofore it had been confined to Jerusalem, and in regular witness by the Apostles, eye-witnesses to the Jews of the resurrection of Jesus, and filling up and arranging the necessary offices, as we read in the Acts. But death and the heavenlies were now the portion of the Church of God; its earthly order and continuance gone; and though Peter preached among the Jews, and the rest we know not from Scripture where, succession and order as to them we find not in Scripture at all. There is no authentic statement as to where any of them went, no Scriptural statement at all, save that Peter continued his labours as Apostle of the circumcision, the only place he holds in Scripture; and that the Apostles continued at Jerusalem, as we find in the Acts and other parts of the Apostolic writings. But another scene now opened. The heavenlies we have seen as the positive, known and only portion of the Church; for the earthlies were Jewish, and the Jews had rejected the testimony of Christ risen and exalted, by the Holy Ghost, from the Apostles and Stephen. Stephen's ministry was suited to this,—chosen among the Hellenists, he formed the link, having purchased to himself a good degree and great boldness to bear witness of Christ not as an eye witness, but by the Holy Ghost. Accordingly this is entirely his charge, not "We can-

not but speak of the things which we have seen and heard," as Peter says to the Rulers, but the witness of the rejection of the Holy Ghost, of which being full, he saw Jesus in the heavenlies.

Thus he formed the link of Jewish rejection, and the position and state of the Church which followed.

And what succeeds? Not Jewish order, but sovereign grace approving itself by the energy of the Spirit, "They were all scattered abroad except the Apostles, and they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the Word." (Acts viii. 1, 4.) Who sent them? Not the Apostles but persecution. Who enabled them? The grace and Spirit of God; and it reached the Gentiles. There was no Gentile Church but by what in these days is called irregularity; what is really the sovereignty of the grace by which any Gentile is called in the extraordinary and seemingly irregular act of God; for salvation is of the Jews, a *Jewish* Jesus is not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but a *glorified* Jesus doeth what seemeth good unto the glory of the grace of which He is now as to men the indiscriminate, but sure distributor. But the character of the change which took place, is at once shown by this dispersion, and universal preaching wherever they went. The ordinary Christians preceded the Apostles, that it might be plainly not derived from them. The whole matter then to justify any thing, was "The hand of the Lord was with them, and many believed," a very irregular and out of the way thing for human nature, but which God has ordered as the way of salvation. Thus we find the instantaneous cessation of derivative arrangement in the Jewish rejection of the Apostles, and the whole dispensation as carried on upon earth assuming a new character. This was the actual breaking of the earthly order, as the former scene with Stephen was the closing of the possibility of then dealing with Israel as Israel, dispensationally.

But a new scene now opens, the regular Gentile form and order of the dispensation in the hands of the Apostle Paul, the Apostle of the uncircumcision, the Apostle of the Gentiles. Did he then derive it from

The Apostles, or was he indeed a successor to our Lord by earthly appointment and derivation? No, in no wise. It was his continual boast that it was not so, his continual conflict with Judaizing teachers, what was often urged on him, as though he needed it; with which they pressed his spirit; but which he as sternly and steadily refused, notwithstanding them who had such authority to the face. He is the type of the dispensation. Every dispensation has its *character*, from the manner in which Christ is manifested and introduced in it; and its order from him under whom it takes its rise as to ministration. God, not yet known to the Church in covenant, but the same God revealed as Almighty, was the dispensation to Abraham, who was called out to trust in Him, and this gave its character to the path in which he had to walk in hope.

Christ, (for now it was in covenant,) revealed as Jehovah the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was He under whom Moses the leader in the wilderness, and Joshua in the land, led successively the children of Israel under the order of successional priesthood.

Christ manifested as Messiah, God manifest in the flesh, the end of the law for righteousness, the head of all Jewish order, was He whom they should have received; and could give and did give His derived authority to the Apostles whom he had chosen.

Christ risen, still a Jewish hope, the securer of the sure mercies of David, was He, whom they rejected, in spite of the testimony of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

Christ glorified and supreme, is the hope to every Jew scattered abroad, and every Gentile sinner, the witness of sovereign grace, whatever the failure in evil. Those in whom it was deposited, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, formed the characteristic of the time in which the Spirit wrought by them. So of the twelve; Christ was the true Vine, (not the nominal Israel,) and they the branches, deriving their authority from Him as the Patriarchs from Israel; the dispensation thus far taking its entire and orderly character from them. It was a Jewish, though a Christian thing—that is, it was Jewish in its

present order ; it began at Jerusalem ; but this ceased as a line when the risen Christ was rejected. The grace of God flowed in through the sandy desert and wilderness of the world, to make green where it flowed, what it found buried in evil in it, when no watering of the tree which He had planted could cause it to bring forth good fruit to His glory, and its own profit and acceptance.

And as the Spirit went like the wind were it listed, every one that was born of it was, according to the measure of the grace, the witness of the grace that he had received ; for God had not lit candles to put them under bushels. St. Paul became the head and characterizing agent of the dispensation among the Gentiles not derivative but efficient. Hence God made him so powerful and so tried against derivative mission. I received it, says he, not of man *nor by man*, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father who raised Him up from the dead. So of the Gospel which he preached, he certified them, (he was jealous of this point,) he neither received it of man, neither was he taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ ; and he gives this general character of himself, "Last of all He was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time," as an *ektroma* ; and this character attaches to the whole dispensation, an extraordinary arrangement and provision, something *ektromatal*, born out of due time, for the time present till the earthly system is just ready to be restored, but belonging entirely to the heavenlies, having no earthly derivation or connection in its power with the succession of that order which was first outwardly established. It derived its stream higher up from the same source, though recognizing it in its place (see Gal. ii. 7, 8.) If it had such connection, what was all St. Paul's reasoning about, or why did he take such pains to prove that his apostleship was not derived from the Jewish Apostles—why was the Spirit of God so careful to refute the notion of the derivative character of St. Paul's apostleship when he preached the same doctrine, and held the same truths as the others ? It was the grand testimony to the break of successional authority, which was Jewish ; the Church, as a separate thing for glory, being now

set on this unearthly footing, and on the basis of its own apprehension of it by the Spirit.

Accordingly, the evidence which the Apostle affords of his Apostolate, is never derivative, or that he had authority from others; but, "If I am not an Apostle unto others, doubtless I am to you; for the seal of mine Apostleship are ye in the Lord: for though ye have ten thousand instructors, yet have ye not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the Gospel." (1 Cor. ix. 2.) "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me,...examine yourselves,...know ye not that Christ dwelleth in you except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. xiii. 3.) "Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." (2 Cor. xii. 12.) So his argument, as to the dispensation, is "When He ascended up on high, he gave some, Apostles; some Prophets," &c. (Ep. iv. 8.) Now the *twelve* were Apostles, and had the express name from our Lord's commission *before* He ascended up on high at all. Yet they do not come into the Apostle's contemplation in this passage at all,—i. e. in any *such* character, because they did not, in that state, constitute a part of the dispensation of gift, and authority by gift, of which he was the minister and expounder. This was associated with the ascended glory of Christ—"When He ascended up on high He gave," &c. Accordingly, when the Apostle was called, he was called not as knowing Christ after the flesh (if he had, he would know Him no more); but as one, who, as a Jew, in ignorance indeed, consented to that very act against Stephen which shewed the determined rejection of Jesus by the Jews, and he was an exterminating Apostle of the Sanhedrim sent forth with a commission to find any of those who called upon the name of Jesus. He was identified, not with the believing, but with the unbelieving portion of the Jews when the question was between them, and he was not a Christian at all while the Church had this (i. e. Jewish) character. He was the witness of the calling of grace, and of the perception of supreme glory. The manner of his call was declarative of both. He was in the career of opposition

the first time he had been in the presence of the divine Being, he was greatly struck by the grandeur and majesty of his character and all his works. He was also carefully insisted on the importance of the hymns of God. The ordinary affairs of life except the seal on the same truth. And it was required by the divine counsels that he

should preach and testify within and without synagogues and congregations, concerning the Lord Jesus, (Acts ix. 20) without anything further than the calling spoken of, he "preached the faith which he had once destroyed," as he himself expresses it, "as it is written, I believed and therefore I spake, we also believe and therefore speak," (2 Cor. iv. 13); just as the other Apostles say "we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts iv. 20.) And so is ever the energy of the Holy Ghost, whether it witness to the sure resurrection of Jesus, or the revealed glory of the Lord, or whether it testify through Jeremiah, and cause him to be "in derision daily" because of his words to the people,—it is in his heart as a burning fire shut up in his bones ; he was weary with forbearing and could not. (Jer. xx. 7.) If in liberty, there was the rejoicing as being counted worthy to suffer shame; if reluctant and tried by the abounding of iniquity in a state ready to be judged, the Word of the Lord was more powerful than the fears ; though "troubled on every side," he believed and therefore spake. The glory of the Lord must be vindicated; and it becomes a positive responsibility. Is a candle lighted to be put under a bushel, or under a bed, and not to be set upon a candle-stick? For "there is nothing hid which shall not be manifested, neither was anything kept secret but that it should come abroad :" and it is *our* business to manifest it in the truth and energy of the Spirit ; therefore "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear ;" and "Take heed what ye hear : with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you," and "to you that hear shall more be given."

Hence we also find the Apostle declaring, "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace to reveal His son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were Apostles before me, but I went into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen

days ; but other of the Apostles saw I none save James the Lord's brother." (Gal. i. 15.) Fourteen years after he went up, but it was by revelation ; and in conference he found that those who seemed to be somewhat, added nothing to him ; and this was the point with him. It was no haughtiness of Spirit, and he was willing to try his word by theirs, but he found they could add nothing, and they owned the grace that was in him, though he derived no authority from them, the appointed Apostles of the Lord, and recognised none in them save in the sphere which God had allotted to them, i. e. the Jewish sphere, and they owned the grace of God, which was in him. When need was, he "withstood them to the face, because they were to be blamed" who were insisting upon the old ordinances. To such things he would give place by subjection, no, not for an hour. (Gal. ii.)

And what afterwards was his career because of the glory revealed to him, his ordination as men speak, if he did not go up to those who were Apostles before him? The energy of the Spirit consequent on the revelation of the Lord still held its character in securing the breaking through the Apostolic succession. There was no derivative link from the Lord, there was the revelation of the Lord and mission by Him, but no human ordination; and in this he worked long, and not only in preaching or teaching strangers, but Barnabas having gone to Tarsus to find him, brings him to Antioch ; and it came to pass that for a whole year they assembled themselves with the Church and taught much people. Who settled this ? Who appointed them here ? Who, Paul ? Who, Barnabas ? The grace of the Spirit of God wrought effectually in them, and so the Apostles, as we have seen, had to judge ; they *perceived the grace of God that was given to him*, and they gave them the right hand of fellowship. (Gal. ii. 9.) But still in public mission had they no derivative authority from any human ordination ? Or was not abstract Apostolic mission the ground on which it rested ? Long had it been so, for God was securing, in every way, that human dependence, human derivation should be broken in upon, for its

place was gone in the earth. The dispensation was one "born out of due time," it must prove itself by its energy from on high; so it had been proved both in preaching Christ and teaching the Church. But now Barnabas and Paul were to be sent out on a definite mission, and of course they had derived authority now. Whence? Every thing still is made to depend on the energy and calling of God. As certain prophets and teachers "were ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them, and when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." (Acts xiii. 2.) Did the Apostle derive his authority, his Apostolic authority, from this ordination? That would be a strange assertion, when he says he had it neither of, nor by man. If this had been his first going forth to preach, it would have been almost impossible to have avoided the conclusion that it had its source in this, and the Apostolate would merely have been from the Church at Antioch. Therefore the Lord, to maintain the character of the dispensation, makes the Apostle not "confer with flesh and blood," but immediately preach on his calling, and afterwards separates him merely to the particular work to which he was then called, thus securing its underivative character. Its value was derived from the energy of the Spirit of God, because of the heavenly character of the dispensation which had its place in the glory (to be revealed), not here at all, and it was so ordered of God; otherwise Apostolic authority is derived from laymen, (according to modern theory, self-ordained men) and the Apostle's assertion of his Apostolate falsified. But it was not falsified, for this was the Holy Ghost's separation of him to Himself for the work to which the Lord had called him, not the conferring a gift, as if his Apostolate depended on that mission, for this the Apostle denies at large in the Epistle to the Galatians, and he passes by this going forth from Antioch entirely in the account of his mission which he gives to them; nor was it the derivation of authority, for this he is equally earnest to deny.

In Paul then we have the founding of the service of this dispensation, resting on the fully recognized Apost-

tleship, but caused, in the way it is founded, to be entirely of a heavenly character, springing from the Lord known then in the glory, having its working and energy by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and breaking in upon the derivative character of the Apostolate in the Jews by every careful arrangement of God; and the laying on of hands made little of as regards the Apostolate, which came not from superior derivative authority, but entirely collaterally, that every link of the sort should be broken. And, we may add, failing as to its earthly position, the moment the energy of the Spirit failed; the moment there was a failure of the unstained godliness, which kept out evil, and left the operations of the given Spirit free. It was sustained by Paul through the energy of the Spirit, during his life, though he knew well that it would end then, that is, as to any real corporate vigor.—“I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.” (Acts xx. 29.) It was not that God, in the word of His grace to which He commended them, as able to build them up, would not both gather out, and sanctify souls; but he felt and well knew that Ichabod was written on the dispensation, as on every other; till He comes who could sustain it enduringly, in the present power of a manifested life, Satan being bound from before Him. So it was among the Jews, the resurrection-denying Sadducees being raised against the testimony of the resurrection, as the self-righteous Pharisees against the ministry of the righteous one. So it was among the Gentiles, false teachers bringing into disrepute the energies of the Spirit of God, and thus devouring the flock, because of the feebleness of the shepherds. Oh how little does the Church know the service of crying and tears, the humility of mind which accompanies the watching of the fold of Christ against the inroads of the enemy—of Satan. But it is gone. Yet there is one that is ever faithful, who, be the shepherds ever so cowardly, does not let His scattered sheep be plucked out of His hand. To return to the subject.—

Let us turn to what we have afterwards of the maintenance for a little season, of the order of the Church of God before the re-assertion of the human derivative claim came to take the place of the Spirit of God. Let us take a glance at another part of Scripture, connected with this—laying on of hands. The Priesthood of Christ is the great characteristic of this dispensation, hereafter in glory to be manifested for joy and praise; now for intercession and gifts of grace, still the same in person. Christ as a Priest in the heavens is now ministering by the Spirit below; and the Spirit is thus witnessing to the world what His priesthood is, as also what the Father is. This is what is brought out in the 17th of John, where Christ prays for the little flock and for those who believe through their word, that they might be one, and with Him in the glory, that the world might believe that He was sent of God. The full accomplishment of this will not be till Christ appears and we appear with Him; but the Spirit is now witnessing to it in the Church, by a supply of grace from Him who will appear and we with Him, and the believer is now called to enter into the glory by anticipation; in Spirit he is made to “Sit in the Heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Hence the Spirit uses Paul, the minister of the uncircumcision, to address the Hebrews; not Peter, the minister of the circumcision, speaking to them *in* their place, but Paul, calling them out of their place into the consciousness of the *heavenly* calling, speaking to them as from the glory of the Son, so speaking and sustaining them in the present failure of the dispensation in them, by the security of an enduring Melchizedec Priesthood. “Wherefore,” says he, “Holy brethren, partakers of the *heavenly* calling, consider Christ Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our profession;” (Heb, iii. 1.) such an High Priest, because such as was not only harmless, undefiled, but was separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, “If He were on earth He should not be a Priest.” He is gone, “not into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” But this was not all; for,

as we have seen, when Paul was "teaching the understanding of the mystery among the Gentiles," he says that this "ascending up on high" was "leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men; and "He gave," &c. (Ep. iv. 8.) This however is not the point I rest on here, but the comparative use he makes, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, of the Priesthood in its Melchizedec character, as contrasted with the very things which we are now considering. "Wherefore leaving the word of the beginning of Christ, let us." says he, "go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God, and of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment; and this we will do if God permit." (Heb. vi. 1—3.) From the 4th to the 6th verse, he then speaks of those things which are the proper portion of the Church emerged out of its Jewish shape, which latter he calls "the word of the beginning of Christ"—(see margin); and he says, that failure from this is irremediable after such patience of God; and in the rest of this chapter he speaks not therefore of the blessings of the given Spirit, save as to the danger of apostasy, (verse 4) but of what their portion under the Melchizedec priesthood would be according to the word of the new covenant.— Of this the Holy Ghost was the present witness. It is not my purpose to open this out now; I refer to it to shew the contrast of what was "the first principles," or "the Word of the beginning of Christ," and "the going on to perfection"—i. e. the knowledge of the priesthood of Christ, the heavenly priesthood of Christ, the heavenly priesthood now witnessed to us by the presence of the Spirit. This contrast, on account of its object, is given in this Epistle, merely in parenthesis, (chap. vi.) But we find thereby the way in which the Jewish elements are treated, not as though they had not their place, but the place they had is explained; and they are Jewish elements. These they are:—The dead, we admit will be raised—There will be eternal judgment—Repentance from dead works is acknowledged to be needful—Baptisms and laying on

of hands we have heard of as existing—But they constitute not the glory and power of the dispensation. The exercise of the Church's mind about them proves its return to Judaizing principles.* The notion of derivative authority is a positive lapse into the order of the dispensation which was broken in upon by God, (as has been already shewn,) to make room for one of another character which was to be the spiritual witness of the heavenly glory and fulness of Christ. Who is St. Paul's successor? We have heard of the successors of St. Peter, who was the direct and remarkable witness to the character of the order of things which was associated with derivative authority. It is always identified in the Gentile Church with Peter, who was not the Apostle of the Gentiles at all. It is the Judaizing of Gentilism, and the whole structure and fabric of the Church, as it now exists, rests upon this. St. Paul, as the Apostle of the uncircumcision was the witness of the character of this dispensation. Where is his successor? Of what See was he head? Was it Rome, the source of the present derived authority? And of what character then is all this derived authority? Where is it in Scripture? Let us see the facts a little further.—

It is not to be denied that St. Paul and the Presbytery laid their hands on Timothy, (1 Tim. iv. 14) and a gift was in Timothy by the laying on of Paul's hands. (2 Tim. i. 6.) The same does not appear in Titus at all, neither was he circumcised, which Timothy was; and Timothy, it appears, also laid hands upon others, for he is desired to do it suddenly on no man. (1 Tim. v. 22.) They were thus special temporary deputies of St. Paul for setting the Churches in order in the things wanting, and appointing Elders: that they were not permanent Episcopal superintendents is clear, because when St. Paul passed by Ephesus, he addresses the Elders or Bishops there, (Acts xx. 17, 28) so as to

* For a more full explanation of these Jewish elements, proving them to have been Jewish, see a tract entitled "an analysis of the vi chap. of Heb." Sold at the Tract Depôt, 1, Warwick Square, London.

demonstrate them not to be under the care of Timothy as one who possessed Apostolic derived authority ; and, in the second Epistle, he charges Timothy to come to him, (2 Tim. iv. 9) as he does also Titus, to come to him at Nicopolis, (Titus iii. 12) wishing them to be with him. They were his chosen assistants in ordering the Churches, and there is nothing in scripture to warrant the conclusion that they were his successors, or that they ever were, as tradition states, appointed Bishops of Ephesus and Crete. We find St. John subsequently exercising the care under Christ, apostolically, of the Ephesian and other churches in those parts, quite inconsistent with the notion of Timothy's Episcopacy derived from St. Paul.

We find then, the energy of the Spirit using whom he thought fit in authority of office, but in the conception of the Church we find not derivative authority and jurisdiction at all. There was the conferring of gift, there was the ordering of those enabled to order, there was the appointment of Elders in every city by those enabled to do so, and the committal of doctrine to faithful men ; there was every care of the Church, but no Apostolical derivative authority ; and what has since been claimed is the false derivation from Peter, who was the Apostle of the circumcision not of the uncircumcision, and whom the Scriptures only so recognize.

I would only add a few words as to the term "Ordain." There is no such word in the Scriptures in the modern sense of the term. Laying on of hands, to have been used in given instances, I do not at all deny. We have seen an Apostle so ordained by Laymen, afterwards conferring a gift by the same ordinance, and Timothy charged not to do it suddenly ; but as we find the whole energy of the Church continually and long carried on without reference to it, so the word translated "ordain" has never, in Scripture, any connection with laying on of hands. Used or not used, Scripture does not so state it, the Spirit foreseeing, I am persuaded, the apostasy of the latter day.

In Acts i. 22. The expression here is merely an insertion of the translators.—See the original, where it

merely is—"must one (of them) be a witness of the resurrection."

The other passages are Acts xiv. 23 ; Tit. i. 5. In the one "chose" or "selected Elders"—in the latter, "appoint"—*χειροτονεω* and *καθιστημι*.

There is no evidence that Timothy was left for such purpose. The Apostle states it to have been to guard doctrine, (1 Tim. i. 3.) not for the purpose of appointing Elders. The Epistle is a general instruction as to his conduct in the Church, and it does not appear that laying on of hands was peculiar to any such office. It may have been used in it, but they are never so connected in Scripture. When Elders are spoken of, laying on of hands is not; when this is spoken of, they are not. It may have been used, but there was no Scriptural identification. Probably it had a much wider scope. It was clearly used among the Jewish Christians for sickness and miracles, and by the Apostle for conferring gifts.

Further I would remark, that while the present care of the Church was exactly what would be consistent with the looking for the coming of the Lord, which occupied the mind of the Apostle, the arrangement of prospective provision by derivative authority for future ages, was wholly inconsistent with it. When he was passing by Ephesus (Acts 20.) in the consciousness that his personal care was closed, he warns the Elders on their own responsibility, although before that Timothy had been left to watch the place, when he went into Macedonia."(Acts xx. 1. 1 Tim. i. 3.) It would appear he did not stay there long. But the charge to him was doctrine. All present care was, as to the way in which they should wait for the Lord, and commitment of trust to those called and gifted, where needed. But the arrangement of derivative authority would have been positive unbelief. Accordingly we find it broken among the Jews where it had this character, and never attempted among the Gentiles where the glory was manifested; but taken, nominally at least, from St. Peter, when he was gone who withheld these things to the face. Our present duty is every possible care of the Churches which God by His Spirit may enable us to take; using with

all diligence, humility, and energy, with crying and te
(in which we surely may expect to use it,) whate
He gives us, to keep out Satan and feed the flock of G
wherever we may be or He may send us, but lean
in constant dependence for the constant supply of
Spirit of His grace, as our only ground of strength, i
when we fail, commanding them to God and to the w
of His grace, which is able to build them up, and g
them an inheritance among them that are sanctif
He who knows this in spirit, will well know its sorro
and how near it draws one to God. But all this is Ge
provision, not for the wickedness of man, but for, t
failure, which, in mans foolishness, shall cause all
centre in the glory of the Lord.

But there is one further point with which we m
close. To the mere laying on of hands, if done spi
ually, I know of no objection; but reference, refere
of the heart, to derivative authority, has quite anot
character. It is Judaizing. It is, if insisted upon,
principle of apostasy, as denying the power and call
of the Holy Ghost, or His competency to send, bl
and sanctify. Wherever we return to Jewish prac
as an imposed necessity we return to the idolatry of
world. There was under the Jewish dispensation sa
tion of worldly elements for a given purpose, and wor
elements, and worldly glory, and honour, had their pl
while things were so ordered. The principles of
human heart which sought them, were dealt with
their own ground and terms, though in God's wa
because, till the rejection of Christ, man and the wo
were not treated with as "dead in trespasses and sin
as "lying in wickedness," as "at enmity with God;"
riches, and honours, and worldly things, accompan
the love of wisdom (2 Cron. i. 12.) and human principl
were dealt with. But on the rejection of Christ,
truth was brought fully out to light, the system of
world was set aside as evil in all its elements, Go
sanction to it in any form or sort ceased. Its "frie
ship was enmity with God." It was convinced of
and righteousness, set up not here in the world but
the heavens, hid with God, revealed to faith. Juda

had been the place of righteousness, but iniquity was und in it, and being set aside, its principles became merely simple worldly elements, without any sanction of God at all, and with merely their own worldly character, and the return to them became apostasy,—turn to the mere evil world. This is the Apostle's statement, the force of which is by no means in general sufficiently estimated. Writing to the Galatians, he says chap. iv. 8. "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service to them which by nature are no gods. But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire *again* to be in bondage? Ye observe days, &c," That is, Gentiles who had become Christians, when they looked to Jewish principles, were returning to their own old Gentile state: for what else was Judaizing now? it was simply joining the world, the ungodly world, which had not the spirit of God in it, and thus ending in the flesh. So the apostle argues in Col. ii. 19—23, especially verse 20, "Why as tho' living in the world are ye subject to ordinances." Wherever then we turn to what is Jewish, a right thing while God's work was of this world, we have the principle of apostacy in us; these things have the rudiments of the world in them, and we shall more or less join the world which has not the spirit, but which is at enmity with God. And where, would ask, has the Church looked to this derivative character as essential and necessary, that it has not joined the world? Receiving the *principle* of the world into its bosom, it soon fell into its *practice*, and this is the character, the form of apostacy. The absence or inversion of the doctrine of justification by faith, and maintaining that of works for salvation, derived authority, and the Church's connection with the world, have ever gone together. However this may be, I refer to it merely as a fact—certainly the Church so fell, at first gradually. Of this we may be sure, wherever we find any Jewish principle or ordinance now, as that which is our order, or obligatory upon us, *we join the world in its rejected state*, for these are now demonstrat-

ed to be the profitless elements of the world, and nothing else, and the apostacy of the Church is involved, in principle. With whatever patience we may bear with those subject to them while they are under them, the imposition of them as though needful is the snare of Satan, leading us back to that from which we are delivered ; for "our conversation is in heaven." History will prove it as to facts, to be the apostacy of the Church, though the Spirit of God can alone prove or shew the principle. I do not reject conferred authority from God where it can be shewn in the grace of its exercise ; derived authority from man I believe to be most evil, and to have apostacy in its character and principle.

The preceding observations may seem protracted, yet I think the importance of the principles warrants the deepest consideration of the subject ; my own mind is very clear upon it in principle, though I may have much to learn in detail. I have endeavoured under the Lord's mercy to confine myself to the principles, to wound no one, the matter being not of controversy but of deep and everlasting truth. It is a remarkable thing that—while almost all the Churches hang more or less on derivative authority—wherever it is settled as a system, we may note, first,—human derivation is its first basis, as a principle ; secondly,—it is connected entirely with St. Peter, and succession from him ; and lastly in conferring the authority, the words are made use of which were used by the Lord in conferring it on His Jewish Apostles, previous to His ascension.







